

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 BUJUMB 00424 111032Z

21

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 SCA-01 SCS-03 SCCT-01

SY-05 /068 W

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O P 110935Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4878

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUJUMBURA 424

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC (SMITH, KENNETH STEVEN AND HUNTER, CARRIE JANE);

PINS

SUBJ: KIDNAPPED AMERICANS: VAGNI REACHES DEAD END

1. FATHER VAGNI VISITED EMBASSY MORNING JUNE 11 FOLLOWING HIS RETURN FROM FIZI-BARAKUI REGION THE PREVIOUS EVENING. HE HAD NOT RPT NOT SUCCEEDED IN CONTACTING REPRESENTATIVE FROM PRP/REBELS AND WAS VERY NEGATIVE ON CHANCES THAT THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE FROM FIZI OR BARAJA. FAZ PRESENCE COMBINED WITH HEIGHTENED ALERTNESS OF REBELS, HE REPORTS, HAS MADE IT VERY DIFFICULT EVEN FOR AFRICANS TO MOVE EASILY THROUGH BUFFER ZONE BETWEEN REBEL AND GOVERNMENT AREAS. REBELS REPORTEDLY ARE NOW INCLINED TO BE TOUGHER THAN FORMERLY ON ZAIRIANS WHO LIVE IN GOZ-CONTROLLED AREAS AND WHO USED TO VISIT REBEL AREA. THERE IS IN HIS WORDS "AN IMPENETRABLE WALL" BETWEEN GOZ AND REBEL-CONTROLLED AREAS, AND ANY NON-AFRICAN EMISSARY THAT ATTEMPTED TO CROSS IT WOULD

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PAGE 02 BUJUMB 00424 111032Z

FACE SERIOUS COMBINED RISK OF TROUBLE WITH FAZ AND CAPTURE BY

PRP ELEMENTS.

2. VAGNI DURING TWO-DAY TRIP IN REGION DID HEAR FURTHER REPORTS CONCERNING KIDNAPPING FROM ITALIAN FATHERS IN FIZI AND FROM ZAIRIAN CATECHISTS 30 OF WHOM WERE ASSEMBLED IN FIZI. ONE STORY WHICH VAGNI HIMSELF GOT THIRD-HAND, AND WHICH HE PASSED ON WITH THE GREATEST RESERVATION AS TO ITS VERACITY, CAME FROM A WOMAN WHO REPORTEDLY FLED THE REBEL LAKE COAST ABOUT JUNE 6 VIA A PASSING FAZ PATROL BOAT, AND WHO SAID THAT THREE WHITE PRISONERS HAD HAD THE BOTTOMS OF THEIR FEET BURNED IN ORDER TO PREVENT THEM FROM ATTEMPTING TO ESCAPE. ACCORDING TO THIS REPORT, HOSTAGES ARE HELD AT TALAMA (2906 EAST AND 459 SOUTH), A LOCATION OPPOSITE BUT LITTLE SOUTH OF KIGOMA.

3. RE GENERAL MILITARY SITUATION IN AREA, VAGNI REPORTED THAT ONE FAZ PATROL BOAT BASED N KALEMIE CONTINUES TO PATROL LAKE (THE OTHERS ARE REPORTED INOPERATIVE) BUT THAT THERE IS NO FAZ PRESENCE ON OR NEAR LAKE ANYWHERE BETWEEN KAZIMIA JUST SOUTH OF UBWARI PENINSULA (SHOWN AS KAZIMA ON JOINT OPERATIONS GRAPHIC MAP) AND KABIMBA, NORTH OF KALEMIE, WHERE CEMENT WORKS IS LOCATED. IN ADDITION TO POSITIONS AT BARAKA, FIZI, AND KAZIMIA, FAZ HAVE SEVERAL OUTPOSTS ON FIZI-LULIMBA ROAD, WHICH CAN BE TRANSITED WITH FAZ CONVOYS.

4. FOLLOWING HIS MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR, STEINER AND MACFARLANE MORNING OF JUNE 8, JUST PRIOR TO DEPARTURE FOR SOUTH, VAGNI WAS SUMMONED TO LOCAL SURETE OFFICE AND QUESTIONED ON PURPOSE OF MEETING. AFTER VAGNI BRIEFED OFFICIAL AND REFERRED TO PRIOR ASSURANCES OF GOZ RE HIS MISSION, SURETE OFFICIAL SAID THAT ALTHOUGH NO WORD HAD REACHED UVIRA ON THIS, VAGNI COULD PROCEED. ON VAGNI'S RETURN JUNE 10, SAME OFFICIAL VISITED HIM AND SAID BUKAVU HAD NOW RPT NOW PASSED WORD THAT VAGNI MISSION AND US EFFORTS WERE TO BE FULLY FACILITATED. VAGNI'S OWN VIEW IS THAT, NOTWITHSTANDING KNOWLEDGE OF MISSION AT UVIRA LEVEL, ANY INTERMEDIARY MIGHT STILL ENCOUNTER UNINFORMED FAZ ELEMENTS TO SOUTH WHO MIGHT CAUSE TROUBLE. THUS KINSHASA'S EARLIER RESERVATIONS ABOUT EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMAND AND CONTROL STRUCTURE IN EASTERN ZAIRE SEEM WELL FOUNDED.

5. VAGNI ALSO HEARD DURING TRIP THAT "HEWA BORA" IS NOT SPECIFIC VILLAGE BUT IS NAME GIVEN BY REBELS TO CHARACTERIZE ENTIRE HIGH-CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 BUJUMB 00424 111032Z

LAND REGION THEY CONTROL. ANOTHER NAME FOR AREA, HE SAID, IS "NGANZAMILIMA."

6. COMMENT: FATHER VAGNI SAID THAT HE WOULD PASS ON IMMEDIATELY ANY FURTHER WORD HE RECEIVED FROM HIS CONTACTS AND COLLEAGUES IN THE FIZI-BARAKA AREA, AND ALSO EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS TO BE OF ANY FURTHER ASSISTANCE POSSIBLE. IN VIEW OF FOREGOING, HOWEVER, WE SEE NO REAL CHANCE THAT HE CAN USEFULLY DO ANYTHING MORE FROM

THIS END. THE CHANCE IS ALSO FAIRLY REMOTE THAT HE MIGHT MOVE  
TO KIGOMA AT SOME POINT AND ASSUME AN ACTIVE INTERMEDIARY ROLE  
THERE IN VIEW OF OTHER CHANNELS IN OPERATION THERE.

7. FOR DAR ES SALAAM FROM STEINER: IN VIEW OF APPARENT DEAD END  
ON VAGNI MISSION AND ABSENCE OF OTHER PROMISING LEADS THIS AREA  
BUJUMBURA NOW SEEMS HEADED FOR PASSIVE ROLE IN KIDNAPPING, AND  
MY CONTINUING PRESENCE HERE SEEMS UNNECESSARY. HENCE I PROPOSE TO  
RETURN TO NAIROBI JUNE 12 UNLESS YOU OBJECT. I CAN TRAVEL  
TO KIGOMA FROM NAIROBI ON SHORT NOTICE IF AND WHEN MY PRESENCE  
THERE IS REQUIRED.  
MARK

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